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That All May Prosper

The Monguor (Tu) *nadun* of the Guanting/Sanchuan Region, Qinghai, China

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Abstract. – Religion and an agricultural economy combine to create a belief that Nadun, a village-level festival in the Guanting / Sanchuan Monguor Region, is important to ensure a good harvest and safety to man and animals. This is a detailed study of this festival; origin, organization, schedule, and performances, esp. the Erlang procession, the dances, the *fala* going into trance, appearance of the Three and the Five Generals, the rites concerning Shaguojiang, and some festival variations. Han influence is considerable on Nadun. [*China, Monguor, harvest festival, agricultural rites, mythology*]

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The Guanting/Sanchuan (GS) Region is approximately 300 square kilometers in area and lies in the southern part of Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County. It is home to 30,000 of China's 160,000 Monguor population and virtually all Minhe County Monguor-speaking Monguor. GS is one of five Monguor "islands." The other four are Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County, and Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture – all in Qinghai Province. Monguor living in Gansu Province constitute the final Monguor group.

We have written about the Monguor funeral (Stuart and Hu 1992a), cultural understanding of illness (Hu and Stuart 1992a), language (Hu and Stuart 1990), wedding (Hu and Stuart 1992b, Ma 1990), and have made general comments with photos of the GS *nadun* in Stuart and Hu (1989, 1990, 1992b).

This paper is a detailed study of the GS *nadun* which is a village-level harvest festival held from the twelfth of the seventh moon to the fifteenth

of the ninth moon. Monguor differ remarkably in language and culture and what we discuss characterizes only the GS Monguor. Monguor in Baoan-xiazhuang also celebrate a harvest festival which they call *natur*. It is held from the 23rd to the 26th of the sixth moon but from initial descriptions we have received, it differs radically from the GS *nadun*. And, as our ensuing discussion will demonstrate, there is much variation as to how *nadun* is celebrated within GS.

1. Origin of the *nadun*

The Word *nadun*

It is likely that *nadun* derives from the Mongolian word for "play," variations of which are shared by Daur, Eastern Yugu, Dongxiang, Baoan (Bonan), and various groups of Mongols (Sun 1990: 496).¹ From the fact that *nadun* seems firmly within the Mongolian language camp, its roots may be in the festival nomadic Mongolians observe entitled *na:dam*. However, GS Monguor origins are very obscure. In this area, bits of pottery on long deserted hillsides date back thousands of years and old Monguor say their ancestors have lived in GS for "thousands of years" suggesting that at least one ancestral branch of the GS Monguor was not nomadic.

Wobo (local pronunciation; standard Mongolian is *obo*:; mounds of stones consecrated to Tiangere (heaven, sky) and various gods, erected in places of high elevations) are noticeable centers of activity for many Mongolians but this is not the case for GS Monguor. Additionally, what actually

1 As we have pointed out earlier (Hu and Stuart 1990) one fault of Sun (1990) is using the Huzhu Monguor dialect to represent the Monguor language. There is great variation between Monguor dialects. In fact, less than one-third of the Monguor population lives in Huzhu. We write *nadun* and other GS Monguor words as they are locally pronounced.

transpires at the Mongolian *na:dam* (horse races, veneration of the *obo*:, wrestling, and historically, archery competitions) and the GS Monguor *nadun* is very different. However, the basic purpose is identical – to beseech the gods to extend blessings for a bounteous harvest (of animals, not grain, in the case of nomadic Mongolians) and safety to man and animals in the next year.

Folklore Concerning *nadun* Origins

When the authors were researching the *nadun* and other aspects of Monguor culture in 1988 and 1989, we were given the first account concerning the *nadun* origins:

Account One: *nadun* Origins²

The Tu of Guanting, Minhe County have an ancient festival held in summer called *nadun* which is unique to Guanting Tu. After crops are harvested and wheat threshed and stored, very large steamed bread buns with new flour are made and offered to Tiangere. Elderly men and young men dress in various ancient clothing, hold colored flags, and dance to the sound of cymbals and beating drums to thank Tiangere for providing a bumper harvest. The dancing lasts from the 12th of the seventh moon to the 15th of the ninth month, depending on the individual village. A number of stories are told in villages about how this ancient dance began, and here is one of the most common:

Long ago there lived a Tu carpenter of universally acknowledged skill who lived in Beidashou [presently in Gansu Province, very near Guanting, just across the Yellow River].

The emperor was planning a new palace for himself and gathered many famous carpenters. However, he was not satisfied with any of their designs and announced that he would kill them all in three months if he was not satisfied.

By chance he heard about a superbly skilled Tu carpenter and commanded him to design and build a new palace. In three months the new palace was finished and it was perfectly magnificent with a splendor never before seen.

The emperor was so shocked he froze in front of the new palace in surprise and joy. But the more he gazed at the palace, the more uncomfortable he became for he felt this carpenter was too intelligent. "I could not have even imagined such a beautiful palace," he thought to himself. At last, he suspected the carpenter was actually a living god for it was obvious the carpenter's ability overshadowed his. The emperor thought someday this superb carpenter might step out of his place if he was not killed, so he secretly ordered his death.

One very kind poor servant of the emperor thought this was wrong and it would be a great pity to kill such a splendid carpenter, so he secretly informed the carpenter of this plan. The carpenter escaped during the night and went back to Sanchuan and became very angry. "I worked so hard for him but look what I get for a reward," he thought and, leading the local people, plotted rebellion.

The emperor heard about the planned insurrection and sent many soldiers to see if it was true. This was during the seventh moon and the carpenter and his people learned the army was coming so the carpenter had the people dye their weapons and dress in different long gowns, hold colored flags, hold fans, and dance to the sound of cymbals and beating drums, as is done in the present *nadun*.

The emperor's army was utterly confused with people's yelling "*Da hao!*" (Good! Good!) and with a dance they had never seen before. The official asked local people about this and were told that it was *nadun* (play) in celebration of a bumper harvest. The officials were at a loss as to what to do, as none of what they saw portended rebellion, so they left and thus the carpenter saved many lives.

Afterwards, every year during the seventh month, Sanchuan people hold *nadun* to memorialize this intelligent carpenter.

However, previously, village *nadun* were held in a very disorderly way – several *nadun* might have been held on the same day. This continued until Zhu Lama [famous *lama* who lived in the early part of the 20th century] carefully arranged different dates for each village.

Account Two: *nadun* Origins³

In old society one disaster after another befell Sanchuan. Heaven never had a good face, was angry throughout the year, there was not one drop of rain, the crops in the field lowered their heads, and in autumn we couldn't collect even so much as a handful of grass. It was an impossible situation! A *fala* [shaman/medium] was invited to stick boards [thrust boards inscribed with evil suppressing incantations into the earth in order to suppress evil that might have been causing the problem or beseech Heaven for help], build altars, and make *wobo*. Even the poorest of families worshipped *dalaga* which was sticking a wooden arrow in a wooden container in which were placed grains of five colors, paper symbolizing money, cotton, sheep hair, tea, clothes, etc. Members of every family knelt in front of it each morning, praying for conditions to improve and for wheat, money, and wealth to come to the home. Additionally, every year between the fifth to the fifteenth of the fifth moon, the village chose 108 strong young men who, under the leadership of an important *lama*, carrying 108 volumes of Ganzhuc scripture went from the Wen Family Village Temple, worshipping all the way around the mountains, beseeching the gods and Buddhas to send a good harvest but this was all in vain.

Later, some people invited a wooden image of Erlang God [to come] from the famous Erlang Shrine in Guan County, Sichuan Province. People said he was the incarnation of Li Erlang, the son of Li Bing [famous mythical general] who managed Dujiang Weir and was very powerful! He could summon wind and rain and could conquer drought and hail and, if His Lord was worshipped piously, there would surely be good weather for crops, and a bumper harvest every year. So every village in Sanchuan, Minhe, piously built a shrine and made the vow: "If you bless us with an abundant autumn harvest, we shall kill sheep and chickens, drape you with red [cloth and/or paper] and all colors, beat drums and gongs, and praise your favor." Strangely, that year we had a very abundant harvest. Afterwards, every year we have had bumper harvests and we hold the *nadun* and that's how the *nadun* started."

2 Told by Lu Congbai of Lu Family Village, Guanting. Collected in autumn of 1988 by a student of Wang Xuelin and translated into English by Hu Jun.

3 Ge (1983: 167–174), Qian (1988: 87–90), and Fan (1986: 246) all mention *nadun* and give the same account concerning *nadun* origins which we take from Ge (1983: 168–169). Ge only indicates that an "old man" told him this story.

These accounts are only two of what we suspect are many. These two have little in common except for the fact that the people were saved from disaster. Most people we interviewed expressed a lack of knowledge as to how *nadun* began.

2. Organization of *nadun*

Villagers elect a *paitou* (chief rank) and a *zongjia* (*paitou* assistant). The *paitou* is the one who is in general charge of *nadun* proceedings and assigns responsibility for such village activities as *lamas* chanting at temples; for taking food to the *lamas* on a daily basis; for chanting of prayers done monthly by old people (mostly women); for the erection of a *chapai* (stake on which incantations are written which is believed to protect the village from bad luck, especially hailstorms, and during the time that it stands, it serves as a signal that livestock must not graze in fields). He enforces fine-collecting when someone violates rules; he is responsible for Qingmiaotuori (carrying sutras about the fields to insure a good harvest) and for the celebration of Erlang’s birthday on the 26th of the sixth moon.

In terms of *nadun* he does such things as assign roles for *nadun* performances, he secures liquor and bread from every household, insures that every family sends representative male members to participate in *nadun* programs, assigns such tasks as the erection of a large Tibetan-style tent which will house village and invited sedaned deities and village elders, prepares tea for a large number of people, and readies costumes for various *nadun* programs.

When and Where *nadun* are Held

Ma (1981) writes that *nadun* was banned from 1949–1981. However, our informants told us that it was not until 1958 that they were absolutely outlawed and that in the early 1960s some villagers held *nadun* for a brief period before they were again prohibited.

In 1963 and 1964 a new policy was launched by Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi. This policy was called Sanzi Yibao which called for more plots for private use, more free markets, more enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profit or loss, and fixing output quotas on a household basis. This was a brief period of relative cultural freedom and some villages revived both *nadun* and Yangguo (performances done during winter featuring local

opera, etc.). In 1965 the Siqing Yundong (Four Cleanups Movement) began and such activities as *nadun* were strictly prohibited. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) soon followed and such cultural performances were absolutely prohibited. In 1976 at the end of the Cultural Revolution some villages celebrated *nadun* but most villagers were busy rebuilding village temples and shrines and it was not until 1978 that *nadun* were widely observed.

Ma (1981) writes that the Song Family Village is the first to hold *nadun* on the 12th of the seventh lunar month (Meiyi Brigade, Zhongchuan Commune), which concurs with what our informants told us, and offers the following as the *nadun* schedule:

nadun Schedule

Lunar Month/Day	Family/Location
7/13	E Family Village, Meiyi Brigade
7/14	Sangbura, Meiyi Brigade, Zhongchuan Commune
7/16	Wen, Qi, and Yang Family Villages, Meiyi Brigade, Jingtian Brigade [after 1983: Wen and Yang; Qi and Wang]
7/18	Wang Family Village, Qingquan Brigade
7/20	Xing Family Village, Qingquan Brigade
7/21	Ma Village, Guanting Commune, Zhaomuchuan Brigade
7/28	Zhao Family Village, Zhaomuchuan Brigade
8/1	Yu Family Village, Zhaomuchuan Brigade
8/3	An Family Village, Zhaomuchuan Brigade
8/6	Zhan and Zhao Family Villages, Zhaomuchuan Brigade
8/12	Dazi Village, Minzhu Brigade, Zhongchuan Commune
8/15	Si Family, Tuanjie Brigade
8/16	Hantou Qi Family, Hexi Brigade
9/1	Baojiawanzi, Bao Family Brigade, Guanting Commune
9/3	Zhu Family Village, Xianfeng Brigade
9/4	Bao Family Village, Guanting Brigade
9/6	La Family Village, La Family Brigade
9/12	Guanting, Guanting Brigade
9/15	Zhu Family Village, Zhongchuan Commune, Guangming Brigade

Ma’s note: Some locations in remote areas are not included in the foregoing list.

Erlang leaves his shrine. As was suggested in folklore concerning *nadun* origins, Erlang, a Daoist warrior deity, looms large in Monguor religion which is a complex blending of various religious elements including shamanism, Daoism, various Buddhistic elements, animism, and veneration of Tiangere.

The understanding of Erlang varies among Monguor groups. For example, some Huzhu Mon-

guor express dislike for Erlang, arguing that Erlang is the same as Gesar and that Gesar represents Tibetans whom, they feel, killed many Monguor ancestors. Thus, to venerate Erlang is to venerate one who killed many of their grandfathers. However, this is not the case in GS where Erlang is viewed as a local patron and the one deity most likely to help in times of distress in this life. However, Erlang is thought to be of no importance in terms of determining the next life – the province of various Buddhas.

A large Erlang Shrine in Hu-Li Family Village was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). After this disastrous time, an Erlang Shrine was constructed in Zhu Family Village where Erlang has resided to the present (1991).

One day before *nadun* begins, about ten men come from the Song Family Village to take Erlang to their village. They enter the temple, light two oil lamps and sticks of incense before the Erlang sedan, kowtow, and then bring the sedan outside to a small platform in the center of the shrine courtyard which is in front of the temple. Two large poles are attached to the sedan and, with drums and cymbals pounding, the sedan is carried to the Song Family Village where it is placed in the village shrine. Early the next morning it is placed under a large Tibetan-style tent on the village threshing ground by the side of the village's temple gods. Erlang is considered the "guest" of the village and is put between the village gods, if the village has more than one god. In the event that there is only one village god, Erlang is placed to the left, which is considered the position of greater respect.

One measure of the extent to which Erlang is respected is what transpires on the part of onlookers as he is transported from village to village. Particularly, old women come out of villages that he passes near and burn *huangbiao* (sacred yellow paper) and sticks of incense when he is sighted. As he comes very near, these women kowtow three times piously, holding clasped hands before their chests, and knocking their heads on the ground.

*Huishou*⁴

Nadun are held by one village alone and also in a joint effort by two or three villages at the same time. Two villages jointly holding *nadun* is the

most common form, with one village serving as host and the other as guest. Generally, when two villages jointly do hold *nadun*, they alternate in the roles of guest and host from year to year.

Villagers may amicably decide not to *huishou* for one particular year and, instead, each village holds *nadun* programs on its own threshing ground. On the fourteenth of the seventh moon, 1988, we attended such a meeting at Sangbura Village Temple and were informed that this was not a *nadun* but instead, only some programs and the *fala* would perform – all in lieu of *nadun*.

Inside the village temple next to the *nadun* grounds a *yinyang* (local name for pseudo-Daoist priest) chanted. *Yinyang* chant for three to seven days which, it is believed, delights the temple gods in lieu of the delight *nadun* would provide and also it thanks Tiangere and all the gods for the harvest the people have realized that year. This suggests that when *nadun* is not held, the gods may be offended and, in order to avert this, *yinyang* are invited to chant.

There may be other reasons for villages deciding not to continue to hold joint *nadun*. For example, in 1988 we attended a *nadun* held jointly by the Yang and Wen Family Villages and were told that in 1983 the Yang Family Village stopped holding a joint *nadun* with the Qi and Wang Family Villages. The reason why these villages held a joint *nadun* was that for many years the villages had few families. Later, the populations of the villages increased and then it was agreed that the villages would separate.

Though relations are generally cordial, disputes may arise over slights, real or imagined, concerning seating arrangements, what each village should contribute, etc. New *nadun huishou* relations may then emerge. Sometimes, however, such relations can be disastrous. For example, our informants gave us the following account:

In 1957 the Qi and Wang Family Villages could not agree on the holding of a joint *nadun* and on the 16th of the seventh moon, when the Qi Family Village held *nadun*, the Wang Family Village did not come to *huishou* but, instead, held *nadun* at their own village. About half-way through their separate programs – even though the sky was clear with no clouds under a brightly shining sun and it was still – a heavy rain fell. The downpour was so intense that none of the businessmen who had set up stalls had time to pack up and everything that was being offered for sale floated away. The flood was so serious that watermelons, brought by the flood from faraway fields, were seen floating by and many birds were beaten out of trees and drowned. More disastrous still, crops in the fields were ruined.

After the downpour, villagers attempted to finish the *nadun* programs. When it came time for the Qi Family Village *fala* to perform, he impaled himself with two iron spikes while in trance then his god said through him: "You did not *huishou*."

⁴ Two possibilities occur to us concerning *huishou*. These are: "Joining together of heads" and "meeting of hands." However, the word is only used in this context: meeting of villages during *nadun*.

I have shown you only three of my formidabilities. If you don't *huishou*, I'll show ten of my formidabilities!"

The Wang Family Village *fala* said precisely the same thing at the same time. Those responsible for the Wang *nadun* then went to the Qi Family Village and invited them to come and *huishou* the next day for a joint *nadun*, which they did. Afterwards, the two villages held a joint *nadun*.

Huishou is the ritual meeting of the *nadun* groups of villages jointly holding *nadun*. In each village, male *nadun* group members assemble in a double line in order of age. Men wear long robes without sashes, carry poles to which colored flags have been affixed, and hold fans and willow branches. The number of males who assemble within one village in a *huishou* line varies, depending on the village's population, but generally does not exceed 100.

Two village elders holding wooden swords and maces lead the *huishou* procession. Immediately behind the elders are drummers and cymbalists, who collectively number about eight. The processions move slowly toward an agreed upon meeting place. Over the years, *nadun* leaders know at what time they should set out and, because of the sounds generated by drums and cymbals, each side can accurately judge how near they are to the other.

As the procession moves along, one or more men move up and down the line, offering cigarettes and bowls of tea and liquor to those in the line. Spectators line the roadside.

The guest side often is preceeded by its own village god. Some of those who carry the sedaned village god (on shoulder poles) told us that the god was difficult to carry and we witnessed on several occasions several sedans weaving and turning about as they made their way to or from the *nadun* site. The explanation for this is that if the sedan weaves and turns, the god is happy. Some also explained that the sedan was at times very light and sometimes very heavy. The lighter the sedan the happier the god is thought to be. Another explanation for the weaving of the sedan is that liquor is presented to the gods and after having had much liquor they are happily drunk and then unable to move in a straight line.

Once the elders leading the two processions meet, firecrackers are set off and the elders greet one another by shouting: "*Da hao!*" Then the host side parts, one line of men on either side of the road and with drums and cymbals pounding, the guest side moves through the parted line and on to the *nadun* performance area. After the guests have gone through the line they are followed immediately by the old men leading the host village's *nadun* group.

The *nadun* Grounds

Both groups proceed to the *nadun* performance area, which is usually a large flat threshing area that will accomodate several hundred to a few thousand spectators as well as many peddlers with stalls and tent-restaurants. At one end of the grounds a tent housing deities is erected. Within this tent, the deities are placed in the center and to one side are usually placed one or more tables with chairs and stools where honored guests are seated and offered liquor,⁵ tea, and cigarettes. These guests are usually old men (women are rarely so recognized) and those with an official position (e.g., commune leaders, culture office leaders).⁶

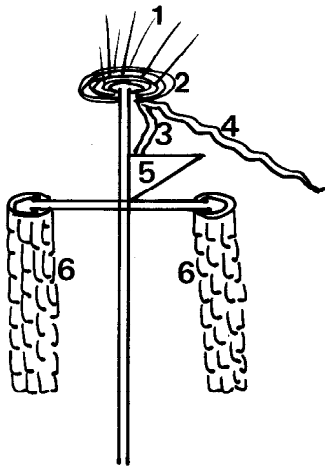
It is here, in front of this tent, that performances will later be offered for the purpose of delighting the assembled deities. At some distance from this tent is usually a smaller second tent which serves more than anything else as a storage area for performance costumes and liquor and bread collected from villagers. Straw is spread on the ground and village men come and go, drinking and donning costumes at the appropriate moment.

At what may be visualized the outer extreme of the performance area (generally no more than 40 meters away from the tent housing the deities) are placed seven high poles (cf. fig.) festooned with sacred paper.

5 *Minliuzi* was in the past the common liquor for peasants. It was made by boiling wheat and highland barley in a large pot. Distillers yeast was then added and, after fermenting for a time, it was distilled. Today, however, the availability of inexpensive commercial *baijiu* (literally "white liquor" which is a distilled liquor ranging from 55–65 % alcohol) has nearly spelled an end to *minliuzi*. Visitors are often warned not to drink *minliuzi* because some poor peasants are unable to afford a donation of either *minliuzi* or *baijiu* and, instead, substitute medical alcohol.

6 In summer 1988, when we arrived at mid-morning at the Sangbura Village Temple, the *nadun* site, Sangbura's two village gods, Jiutianshengmu and Shuicaodaiwang were on either side of Erlang, who as the guest, occupied the center position. The village *fala* sat to the left of the gods, with other older village men. To the right of the gods was a Living Buddha aged 75 and in front of whom people occasionally kowtowed. He had formerly been a member of the People's Congress.

Later, when the *fala* went into trance and "performed," a space was kept open so the Living Buddha might observe the *fala*. This was explained as a courtesy and we were told specifically that the Living Buddha had no control over the *fala*. This differs from what we (Stuart et al. 1989) were told concerning the control Living Buddhas exercised over the Mongolian *gerten* in Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai.



Central *nadun* Pole (This is the centre pole. On either side are three poles from which hangs only *qianliang*.)

1. Willow twigs and branches
2. *Shoupaguer* (for which we have no explanation)
3. Sky Bridge
4. Snake (*moga*) paper
5. Earth Star
6. *Baogai* (sacred paper)

When the *nadun* grounds are reached, host and guest groups march to separate sides in front of the tent housing the assembled deities where they each circle in a clockwise direction. This circling is called *longmenzheng* (dragon gate formation) which was a battle formation devised by Xue Rengui, a famous Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907) general who died in the seventh century while fighting in the present northwest of China. He often appears in local folklore.

After circling several times, the two groups form two long lines and march together to the north tent. This formation is called *yizi changshe zheng* (single line battle formation). Each part of the *nadun* groups meet and shout in a long and drawn out manner “*Da hao!*” several times, then move on. This completes the first *huishou*.

Next, the groups circle two or three more times then rest, which amounts to sitting on *nadun* grounds and being offered tea, liquor, and cigarettes. Then two old men, one drummer, and one cymbalist stand in front of the gods inside the tent. The two old men stand to the right and the drummer and cymbalist stand to the left.

In some villages, shortly before the two old men begin singing, a large bowl and old pot, tied with a piece of red silk, are placed near the gods under the tent, which is *jiudian* (offering sacrificial liquor) for the ancestors.

After a short time for the drummer and cymbal-

ist to sound their instruments and shout “*Da hao!*” the two old men begin to sing “Seven Stars”⁷ in a long drawn-out manner. At the end of every line, the drummer and cymbalist sound the drum and cymbals as they shout “*Da hao!*”

Seven Stars

Seven stars yoo, original seven stars yoo ...

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Spoke seven stars then invite Dragon King ...

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Invited Dragon King then open sky gate ...

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Opened sky gate then open gods’ gate ...

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Opened gods’ gate and invite all the gods.

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Invited all the gods then invite Erlang.

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Invited Erlang [who] then sits in the holy hall.

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Sits in the holy hall and receives incense and [oil] lamps.

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Receives incense and [oil] lamps then saves the multitude.

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Then there is a short pause and a song praising Erlang is sung:

nadun Song Praising Erlang

(On the 15th of the seventh moon,⁸ [at] one shrine two villages happily meet)

Innumerable *qianliang*⁹ thank Tiangere’s favor

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Twelve *xupan*¹⁰ to thank Earth’s favor

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

The first jar of liquor and the first taste to thank gods’ favor

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Erlang God wears a three mountain hat

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Draped in a serpent dragon robe

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Treasure armour buckled at his waist

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Wears boots that can take him anywhere

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Holds an evil-piercing sword

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

Erlang God rides a white-dragon horse

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

White-dragon horse eats treasure mountain grass

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

White-dragon horse drinks golden spring water

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

White-dragon horse is saddled with a treasure saddle

Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

⁷ This account was told to us by an eighty-four year old man while we were attending the Wang Family Village *nadun* in August of 1988.

⁸ *nadun* date.

⁹ Long strips of sacred yellow paper.

¹⁰ *Xupan* (Tu) are large loaves of round steamed bread.

Plum blossom stirrups hang from the treasure saddle
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...
 Erlang God rides the white-dragon horse down to the meeting place
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...
 Down to the meeting place and inspects and accepts the meeting of the two groups
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...
 After inspecting and accepting [we] dance *huishou*
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...
 Erlang God brings joyful winds and joyful rains
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...
 Brought joyful winds and joyful rains delivering the multitude
 Da – hao – oh o – hai ...

In some *nadun*, other songs may be sung for other deities.

After this song, some old men throw the *gua* on the ground in front of the tent. *Gua* vary. Many are an elongated egg-shaped piece of wood, approximately 10–12 cm long, cut into two lengthwise pieces. Once cut into two pieces each piece has a flat (cut) side and a rounded side. The *gua* is tossed by putting the two flat sides together and then letting them fall to the ground. The way in which the pieces land portends the future or gods' happiness. For one piece to land flat-side down and the other to land flat-side up is considered propitious. Any other combination is an ill omen.

Another common *gua* is *bagua*. Such *gua* are the general shape of what we have described but are not cut. Instead, the *gua* body is eight-sided (hence the name, *ba* meaning eight) and inscribed with the Eight Diagrams. The future or pleasure of the gods is determined by which sides face up when the *gua* is thrown.

When the *gua* is thrown at this time, there is noticeable tension among those who have gathered. The gods' pleasure is being divined and if the gods indicate they are displeased through the *gua*, there is dismay. Godly displeasure suggests that the *nadun* assembly has not satisfactorily arranged the *nadun* proceedings and if the *gua* repeatedly shows that the gods are displeased, it is expected that the gods through the *fala*, later in the program when he goes into trance, will say why they are displeased.

In terms of this initial stage of *nadun*, the *gua* is thrown three times and, if the *gua* indicates the gods are happy, the program continues. However, if each of the three times shows the gods are unhappy, then the two *nadun* groups must march about the threshing ground again, repeating what we have described. Then the *gua* will be thrown again. This will continue until the *gua* indicates that the gods are happy.

Once the *gua* does indicate the gods are happy,

the crowd breaks into happy cheers and many shouts of “*Da hao!*” ring out. Then the two *nadun* groups disperse with those taking part in *nadun* programs retiring to a small tent some distance opposite the large tent to dress in appropriate costume.

3. *nadun* Performances

Performances begin with pole dancing followed by the “Farmer’s Dance,” dance-plays drawn from the historical novel “Three Kingdoms” (written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century depicting the collapse of the Han Dynasty (206–220 AD) and subsequent contention for power), and usually conclude with a local story of killing a tiger. The final moment of the *nadun* entails the *fala* going into trance and his god speaking through him.

Pole Dancing

Four men take four of the god-sedan poles and move to the threshing area center. In pairs the four men perform pole dancing which has three movements.

Dingdaoba.¹¹ One man of each pair grasps a pole and raises it above his head then brings it down and lightly taps his counterpart’s pole, which is now held above his head. The two then switch roles and the action is repeated.

Siaodaoba. Each man holds his pole at belly level then each strikes the other’s pole.

Jadaoba. In this the third and final movement, one man of each pair squats and, with his poll, sweeps it in the direction of his opponent’s feet, who then leaps into the air, the poll passing underneath. The two switch rolls and this is repeated.

Zhuangjiaqi (Farmer)¹²

This program generally follows pole dancing. Four men and two boys perform. The four men represent an old couple and the couple’s newly married son and daughter-in-law. The father wears the mask (locally made) of an old bearded farmer, a bracelet of willow twigs around his right wrist

11 *Ding* may mean “head,” *jiao* may mean “foot,” *sa* may mean “cast.” We feel these three words describe movement in the pole dance. We have no explanation for *daoba*.

12 *Zhuangjia* is Chinese meaning “crops,” *qi* is a Monguor suffix meaning “one who does the work of.”

and both ankles, a white shirt, and holds a fan in his left hand. Pieces of silk are tied at his waist.

The son's costume resembles that of the father, the difference being that his smiling mask indicates that he is younger.

The two women are dressed in long indigo blue gowns, split on either side and in their hands, each holds strips of white and red silk.

All are barefoot. As drums and cymbals sound, they enter the threshing ground area and make a circuit which notifies the crowd that they have arrived and that this program is about to begin. Four or five men hold liquor flagons or small bowls of the same, and shouting "*Da hao!*" offer liquor to the four.

After assembling in the center of the threshing ground, which by this time is ringed with spectators, the father dances and through his movements communicates to his son and daughter-in-law that they should kowtow, beseeching Tiangere to bless the crops. The father kowtows first and to his immediate right and rear is his wife. Behind the parents are the son and his wife. As the father kneels, his buttocks in the air, the son and daughter-in-law butt the father in his buttocks with their heads which brings a roar of laughter from the crowd. The father jumps up, scolds the young people, and instructs them to kowtow again.

The father kneels once more and the confused daughter-in-law sits on the father's back while the son again butts his father in the buttocks with his head, bringing renewed shouts of laughter from the crowd. Enraged, the father leaps up and scolds the young people. The third attempt proves successful after which the four players rest for a short time, drums and cymbals cease, and the performers are offered tea and liquor. Those assisting may also come to each performer with a towel and wipe sweat from their faces.

After this short rest the drum and cymbal begin sounding again and the father and son go into the crowd and take some of the old men in the audience by the hands and pull them into the center of the threshing ground where they very briefly dance with them. This dance follows no set pattern. The two dancers simply move a few times back and forth to the rhythm of the drum and cymbals and then the old men are urged to sit in the inside of the circle formed by the spectators around the threshing ground.

The old men, who are considered to be highly respected, resist being taken into the circle but this is more out of modesty than genuine desire not to be singled-out. Such attention is a mark of honor.

Then the father addresses the seated old men and says: "Now every village's *laozhe* (respected old men), please tell my son whether agriculture or business is more important."

One man then stands and on behalf of all the *laozhe* says: "The earth and fields are filled with grass and weeds and then with the blessings of Tiangere and myriads of gods, thank Tiangere, we get good crops. Crops are the foundation of everything. We should give the first taste of flour, the first cup of liquor, and twelve *xupan* to the gods and Tiangere to express great thanks."

Then the father asks: "What should we do after today?"

The *laozhe* answers: "From the point of agriculture, we will carefully grow crops and unite as one. We will strive for a bumper harvest next year and dance *shenghui* [holy meeting and here refers to *nadun*] again."

Then two boys, each wearing an ox-head mask, representing two oxen, enter while men bring out a plow and cultivator. The two oxen are harnessed and the father tells the son to plow. The son, bumbling and inept, places the plow in front of the oxen in preparation to hitching, which brings laughter from the audience. The father angrily beats the son and scolds: "You wastrel! You know only stealing and gambling but you know nothing about growing crops." Frightened, the son expresses sorrow. At a loss as to what to do next, he again demonstrates how to hitch the plow to the oxen. The family then stands and devoutly faces the assembled sedaned gods. The father then performs *jiudian* (here it signifies a sacrificial offering of liquor to the gods), burns some *huangbiao*, and prays to the gods, asking that they bless them with an abundant harvest.

Drumbeats come faster, and the father and the son, using the plow, draw an image resembling the Han language character *tian* (field) on the ground, symbolizing the need for work in the fields. As they plow, mother and daughter-in-law follow, dancing behind them, seemingly broadcasting seeds. In the process of doing this, the mother spans the father's buttocks, amusing the crowd. Then the drummers and cymbalist and four or five others, holding flagons and bowls of liquor, shout "*Da hao!*" and offer liquor to the actors, who then retire.

Throughout the performance the audience gives varying degrees of attention. Some spectators wander to and from the site, children run about, there is much conversation as *nadun* is a social occasion and many friends and relatives who have not seen each other for a long while are reunited. Drinking

liquor is an integral part of Monguor culture and much liquor is consumed on such occasions. Often, Han peddlers come and spread their wares (yarn, needles, thread, tobacco pipes, etc.) on the ground. A number of Hui open small restaurants. Other spectators, especially older people, sit or stand around the area, and are the most attentive. The atmosphere is one of relaxed festivity and continues in this vein until the end of the program when the *fala* is possessed.

Three Generals

When this begins, three men holding weapons and dressed as the generals, Guan Yu (also known as Guangong), Liu Bei, and Zhang Fei, enter the performance area and dance in a circle. Each man holds his weapon in his right hand as though it (the weapon) were resting on his shoulder. The left hand is placed behind the back. To slow drumbeats, the men stand on one leg and the other leg is brought up off the ground. The raised leg is bent a bit and placed in front of the standing leg. This movement is repeated, each leg alternating.

Mask color and expression identify the characters. Guan Yu's mask is bright red and conveys an impression of anger; Liu Bei's is white conveying an impression of seriousness; Zhang Fei's is green and violent; and Lu Bu's is white and frivolous.

After a few minutes the drum beats faster and the men suddenly reverse direction with much faster movements and wave the weapons overhead as though they were riding on horseback to fight. This movement continues for a few minutes, the three "brothers" circling.

Then Lu Bu appears. He jumps about agilely, holding a fan in the right hand and a piece of *qianliang* in the left, signifying that he is challenging the three generals to war. He circles the three generals who continue to dance, then hands the *qianliang* (paper of challenge) to Guan Yu, then retreats from the performance area.

Guan Yu reads the paper, then his movements become agitated, suggesting rage. He hands the paper to Liu Bei who also becomes enraged after reading it. He hands it to Zhang Fei who, in great anger, tosses the paper away.

The three circle several times to the sound of quick drumbeats and pounding cymbals, then an old man holding a green sword comes out of the audience and hands it to Liu Bei as both dance. This suggests that it is the will of the people that the three generals fight against Lu Bu. The old man then retires from the scene.

Drumbeats slow, and Liu Bei and Zhang Fei rest while Guan Yu performs alone. He repeats the previous dance movement then one drum is placed in the center of the performance area. On top of the drum is placed a large *xupan* (symbolizing a whetstone) and a small bowl of liquor (symbolizing water used to moisten the whetstone). His upper body trembles. He gives every indication of anger as he steps quickly around the upright drum, then begins sharpening his sword. He whets the sword in each of the five directions in the order of the east, south, west, north, and middle (the sword pointing up indicating the middle direction).

When he finishes, Liu Bei follows and sharpens his sword. Then Zhang Fei performs, sharpening his baton. Lu Bu reappears at this juncture with his baton and while the generals rest, he dances around in the same way the others did at the beginning of the performance but more quickly.

Suddenly the three generals jump up and dance around Lu Bu, with the drums and cymbal sounding loudly and quickly – the generals are now locked in fierce battle.

After a few minutes of this Lu Bu's mask is taken off by Guan Yu and hung on his sword, suggesting Lu Bu has been beheaded. The audience shouts "*Da hao!*" congratulating the victory. Drums and cymbal slow and the three generals retreat proudly, in the company of the drummers and cymbalist, the latter shouting "*Da hao!*" as they return to the south tent.

Drawn from the "Three Kingdoms," this performance tells the story of how the three sworn brothers, Guan Yu, Liu Bei, and Zhang Fei, defeated Lu Bu three times at the city of Hulaoguan. In some villages, some men holding long willow limbs appear with Lu Bu, symbolizing Lu Bu's soldiers, and dance for a short time.

Five Generals

Two drummers and one cymbalist enter with four or five men holding liquor and bowls of liquor, loudly shouting "*Da hao!*" They are followed by five other men wearing masks representing Guan Yu, Liu Bei, Zhang Fei, Cao Cao (wearing a green mask with a scheming facial expression), and Lu Bu.

This dance is similar to "Three Generals" in terms of movement and content. However, one difference is that throughout the performance, the five generals perform at the same time. The performance concludes with Guan Yu removing Lu Bu's mask (symbolizing the beheading of Lu Bu).

Shaguojiang

The meaning of *shaguojiang* is ambiguous. We are unable to relate this title to the performance if it is translated as "kill/slaughter country general." Another possibility, which is equally as unexplainable is for *guo* to be a surname. Ma (1986) has substituted *hu* (tiger) for *guo* which makes the title easier to explain (tiger slaying general) as tigers are killed in the course of the performance – but this is not what people actually say.

We collected the following folklore related to this performance:¹³

In the time of the Three Kingdoms [AD 220–280], the image of Emperor Shenlong resembled that of a cow. At that time, wild animals such as tigers and wolves often attacked people and Emperor Shenlong suppressed them [the wild animals]. This dance is performed to remember Emperor Shenlong.

Some people also say that Shaguojiang was king of a mountain country. In this kingdom, a tiger often ate people.

One woman's husband was eaten, so the wife took her husband's head and went to ask the king to do something to help the people. But the king disbelievably said: "I'll believe you when I see the tiger eating people," then the two oxen carried his sedan and a monkey led the way. As they walked through the mountains two tigers sprang up from the human corpse they were eating. Shaguojiang was so enraged that without ordering the sedan to a halt, he jumped out and slew the tigers.

People dance this program to always remember and sing the praises of Shaguojiang who helped our people. Ma (1986) provides a description of this dance, which we present below in an abridged version:¹⁴

In this program Shaguojiang sits on a ladder which symbolizes the sedan carried by the two oxen. A monkey is in front and suddenly two tigers appear. Then Shaguojiang jumps down from the ladder and dances, as though fighting with the two tigers. The monkey and oxen aid him.

The warrior who slays tigers in this dance is a protective deity for man and livestock. The dance's first part tells a story of how two tigers and two oxen fight, then the tigers throw the oxen which suggests the oxen are defeated. The second part has young men of the audience getting up and fighting with the tigers with each side experiencing moments of victory and defeat. The dance's final part has the warrior brandishing a sword, fighting with the tigers. [In the past when this dance was performed] two female fighters stood behind him, each holding a shield, standing to the left and right sides of the tigers in attack positions. After several rounds of fighting, the warrior at last kills the tigers and thus rids the people of a scourge.

The dance vividly expresses the determination and desire of the Tu to overcome beasts and protect

man and livestock. When the tigers throw the oxen, the audience is excited, drums beat wildly, and the audience shouts: "Come on, young men, defeat the tigers!" Following these shouts, young men, a bit intoxicated, get up and fight the tigers. They lock together producing a scene that is profoundly affecting and the emotions of the audience and actors mingle. Then an old man rises and invites the warrior to struggle with the tigers on behalf of the people. The warrior accepts the invitation and immediately dashes out, waving his sword with the vigorous movements of a dancer and defeats the tigers. This hero who slays the tigers for the people was worshipped as a god by the Tu.

Folklore recounts:

The warrior was actually a mountain god. One day a monkey lured two tigers down from the mountain who then devoured two oxen. Afterwards, people and livestock were often attacked by tigers. People were thus forced to ascend the mountains and ask Mountain God for help. He promised to help and seated in a sedan accompanied by two female fighters he descended the mountain. As the two tigers were attacking people Mountain God jumped from his sedan, pulled out two swords, and struggled with the tigers. Two female fighters helped him and at last they killed the two tigers. Afterwards, people lit joss sticks and lamps in worship of Mountain God. As the saying goes, "If Mountain God does not open his mouth, then the tiger will not eat people."¹⁵

An examination of the warrior's clothing reveals that he wears a fighting robe, holds a sword, and wears an ox-head mask which explains why local people call him Ox Prince of the Devils. In fact, a human body with an animal head is the mark of a protective god for both people and livestock. While the warrior dances, he bends his knees and performs with jumping steps. This is explained in legend as Mountain God leaping from his sedan when he saw the tigers before the sedan stopped. Less believable but suggested by some, is that the warrior thus imitates animal behavior.

Another detail to be noted is that there are two female fighters in the dance. In legend they were supposedly adjutants of the Mountain God. However, based on the roles they perform in the dance, they are likely the warrior's spouses.

It is believed that if the people cannot defeat the tigers in the dance, they will not have the power to escape from beasts in life. Therefore, when the actors, wearing tiger masks, throw the oxen all the audience give oral encouragement to the young men who then stand up and fight with the two tigers. The audience unconsciously feels their own security and the outcome of the battle are closely linked.

15 That is, only if Mountain God orders, will tigers eat people.

13 Mr. Wang, Director, Guanting Cultural Office (now deceased), gave us this information in the summer of 1988.

14 The abridged translation we provide was done by Shao Jiahui and Li Xuewei whom we gratefully acknowledge.

We add that in some villages where Suojieye is venerated as a village god (e.g., the Yang and Qi Family Villages) this dance is not considered propitious because Suojieye is said to be Niumowang's (Ox Devil Prince) son (also known as Honghaier, Red Boy). Because a son should never watch his father's performance – the father-son relationship does not permit a son to watch his father “play” – the god, Niumowang, is angered by this performance. Though Niumowang is never venerated as a god in GS, his anger is still manifested in the form of more fighting than usual in *nadun* crowds in villages where this dance is performed.

Today, denuded and eroded mountain sides suggest tigers could not live in the GS region. However, population has increased dramatically within the last fifty years. Old people recall the days when there were wild goats in the area which were hunted, and folklore suggests that in the past the area was densely forested, creating a habitat that tigers could have lived in.

We were told that some villages performed other *nadun* dances at some point in history but we were not able to collect any information about such dances.

Fala

Fala are religious practitioners common to Han and Monguor in eastern Qinghai. They are often consulted in the case of illness and in trance, seek to cure the patient by expelling whatever evil is thought to be responsible for the illness. Tibetans have a similar practitioner known as *thawa* and perhaps the origin of the word *fala* may be here, as there is no *th* sound in either Monguor or the local Qinghai Han dialects. Another possibility is that when many *fala* are in trance they repeat the word *fa* for which we have no explanation. In eastern Qinghai, male and female *fala* practise but in GS only males are *fala*.

The *fala* goes into trance toward the end of the *nadun* and, in terms of audience interest, this is clearly the high point of the entire proceedings. As we described previously, prior to this time, the audience is in a festive mood. The *nadun*, to the time of the *fala* going into trance, is seen as an attempt to delight the gods. When the *fala* is possessed the gods will speak through the *fala* and say whether the gods are pleased or displeased. This is a reason for tension because if the gods speaking through the *fala* indicate displeasure, then the gods must be appeased and what form this appeasement

may take is difficult to predict. Secondly, there is a strong sentiment, particularly among old people, that when the *fala* is possessed, he is no longer mortal but a god incarnate.

One question those who did not attend a *nadun* invariably ask is if the *fala* stuck spikes through his flesh and if so, how many spikes did he use. The more spikes the *fala* uses, the more genuine the *nadun*. For example, Dazizhuang (Mongolian Soldier Village) *nadun* are considered to be the best or among the best because the *fala* uses two or more spikes.

Now we give a description of what the *fala* actually does at *nadun*. In most villages the *fala* sits either near the deities or, near the smaller tent opposite the larger tent sheltering the deities. When the last *nadun* dance is finished (usually Shaguojiang), he goes into trance, begins dancing, and runs to the larger tent.

In preparation, drummers have assembled in a double line in front of the deities and furiously beat their drums. At this point the crowd is in a fever pitch of excitement and people push to get near the space which has been left open for the *fala* between the two tents. Interestingly, the only spectators who seem not to be affected by the *fala* and what he represents are the children present who laugh at and run with him, as he runs back and forth across the threshing ground.

As the *fala* runs toward the assembled deities, he shakes his ax and jerks his steel whip, tied to his side. Two men hold a stout wooden pole before the deities. The *fala* may chop the pole with his ax and if he is regarded as a “true” *fala* will shake two or more fingers at the deities (the number will be even, odd numbers in this context are considered unlucky). The number of fingers he shakes are the number of spikes he wishes to be given. These spikes are usually kept before the deities. He may or may not be handed the spikes. If he is old, his children and some villagers may hide the spikes and refuse to give them to him. They may say something on the order of, “You are old now. Everyone knows that you are a true *fala*. When you were young you stuck yourself so many times. You don't need to do it anymore.”

After this moment, the *fala* runs to the seven poles festooned with sacred paper, swings his ax at some of the paper, and brings it back to burn before the deities. Aided by other men, he also burns paper in the five directions. After this, he returns to the deities where he is handed the *gua*. He lets the *gua* fall and the pleasure of the gods is thus determined. If the *gua* repeatedly shows the gods are unhappy, the *fala*'s god may speak through

him, explaining why. During this time, villagers may talk to the *fala*'s god through the *fala*. Questions most usually asked are about the next year's harvest. At any rate, the *gua* will continue to be thrown until it indicates the gods are happy. When this signal is received, loud joyous shouts of "*Da hao!*" rise up and shortly thereafter the *fala*, now going out of trance, crumples to the ground and after piously kowtowing to his deities, is led away.

The poles that have held the sacred paper are then taken down, and in the holes in the earth, old men place incense sticks which they light and burn – an offering to Earth God for so disturbing the Earth.

Men then bring out *xupan* which they break into pieces and throw into the air – offerings to the gods and the Sky. Those present scramble to catch pieces of this bread which is considered "lucky bread." Next, men slam wooden poles through the rings of the deities' sedans and prepare to leave – conveying Erlang to the next village that will observe *nadun*. Many of the participants, especially women and children, kneel in long lines over which the deities pass. This is considered propitious and helpful in insuring the general welfare of the supplicant.

Because Erlang is the visiting guest, as he leaves he is escorted for a short distance by local sedaned deities, then the latter are returned to their local temples/shrines. Thus concludes the *nadun*.

4. Variations

Villages without a *fala*. Several villages in the plain area have no *fala*. When it comes time for the *fala* to appear, the local village shrine-keeper usually acts out this role, although some villages may invite a "real" *fala* from another village. The "imitation *fala*" do all that a genuine *fala* does – except pierce themselves, and as they are not in trance, no deities speak through them.

Some mountain areas. As we indicated in our introduction, there is considerable variation within the GS region. What we have described typifies plain villages. *Nadun* in some mountain areas are quite different. For example, the four mountain brigades of Wu Shi, Xian Feng, Qian Jin, and Guang Hui share a general shrine in Wu Shi Village. Qian Jin Village also has a shrine. When the four brigades celebrate *nadun* at the Wu Shi Village shrine, Qian Jin Brigade sends a *nadun* group to *huishou*. And, when *nadun* is celebrated at Qian Jin Village, the other three brigades each send a *nadun* group to *huishou*.

The two shrines have the same gods – Silangye and Niangniangshen. *Nadun* is usually held on the fourth or sixth of the ninth moon and there are no programs, as there are in plain areas, nor is a tent erected. The *gua* is not thrown, the *fala* is not asked questions, and "Seven Stars" is not sung (unless someone present happens to know the song). Instead, men dance, circling in front of the shrine (as there is no tent). There is much drinking of liquor. When the *fala* is possessed he jumps up and may or may not stick two spikes through his cheeks. After burning sacred paper, the *fala* tosses sacrificial bread¹⁶ skyward, along with other men. The *nadun* is thus concluded.

Prior to liberation *nadun* in this area were much like that of plain areas today. We were told: "Now, most people don't have a very strong faith so *nadun* are much less magnificent than those of the past."

5. Conclusion

The future promises a continuation of *nadun*. Religion and an agricultural economy combine to create a belief that *nadun* is important to insure a good harvest for the next year. Only when the gods and the Sky are so delighted and venerated will the next year's harvest be more certain. Failure to hold a *nadun* may insult the deities who in anger may visit disaster and calamity on villages not celebrating *nadun*.

Additionally, *nadun* are held after a period of intense agricultural work and, as such, represent a time for recreation and rest through a form (*nadun*) that local people take pride in as being distinctly Monguor. *Nadun* have not changed much over the years, according to aged informants, except that better economic conditions today permit better costumes, the *fala* of the past were stronger than

16 When *nadun* is to be held, every family makes bread. Some of the resulting round loaves may weigh one kilogram. Some of this bread is eaten by *nadun* performers. Bread remaining after the *fala* and others throw bread skyward is divided among every village family. When Qian Jin villagers come to the general shrine to *huishou*, the general shrine gives them fifty loaves. When the general shrine *nadun* groups go to Qian Jin to *huishou*, the Qian Jin group returns fifty loaves.

Folklore says that when *nadun* were first being held and, at the same time, the shrines were being constructed, each side had only fifty families. So each side gave the other fifty loaves of bread so each family would have one loaf. Now, though the number of families on each side exceeds fifty, this tradition of the "fifty loaves" continues.

those of today, and dances tended to be better executed in the past than today.

Nadun also provide a rare opportunity for relatives and friends who have not seen each other for a long while to visit. Those attending a *nadun* are required, by local convention, to visit relatives in host village. Depending on where a particular *nadun* is held, thousands may attend, most from outside the village.

Research on *nadun* origins would benefit from the study of festivals held at the same time by Tibetan-speaking Tibetans living in GS which at this writing we know very little about. The Han influence does seem to be considerable on *nadun*. Erlang is considered to be a Han creation and "Five Generals" and "Three Generals" are clearly derived from the galaxy of Han mythology.

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